

How to Study the Bible for Yourself

Preparation for Bible Study

- I. Need for Preparation
 - a. If you accomplish anything of significance, it takes preparation.
 - i. Eat – Set the table
 - ii. Wash the car – Get out the stuff
 - iii. Marathon – Must train
 - b. If we want to succeed at bible study we need to first prepare.
 - c. Preparation for Bible Study - One of the most overlooked steps
- II. Material Preparation
 - a. NEED A GOOD HARD COPY BIBLE
 - i. Example – Walla Walla – Tried to get through classes without buying the books
 1. Struggled.
 - ii. George Barna
 1. The way Americans engage with the Bible is changing.
 2. Though most Bible users (91%) still prefer to use a print version of the Bible when engaging with scripture, an equal number (92%) report using another Bible format than print in the past year. Use of technology-related formats are all on the rise.
 - iii. BUT – There are some things you will do with a hard copy bible that you can't do electronically.
 - iv. If you don't have a good Bible – you need to invest in one.
 - v. *Personal Example – When I purchased a bible in Academy*
 - vi. What makes a good bible?
 1. Quality Materials
 - a. KEY - Last a while
 - b. Binding – Hard Cover / Leather
 - c. Paper – Quality paper / not newsprint
 2. “Word for Word” - Translation of the Bible
 - a. Translation – KJV, NKJV, NASB, NRSB
 - b. Dynamic Translation - NIV
 - c. Paraphrase – Message, Clear Word, Living Bible
 - d. We will not limit ourselves to one Translation.
 - i. KJV & NKJV
 - ii. Also – NASB, NRSV,
 - iii. Original languages – Greek and Hebrew.

3. Text

- a. Large text for older eyes
- b. Paragraph Verse Separation
- c. Columns
- d. Margins
- e. Red Letter Edition

4. Reference Material

- a. Cross Referencing
- b. Footnotes
- c. Maps
- d. Concordance / Dictionary

b. Pen / Pencil

c. Notebook / Paper

- i. Inductive – Dissect the text and write your questions.
- ii. Deductive – Write down all your passages

- iii. Write down discoveries / observations - Remember
- iv. Draw diagrams

d. Book References

- i. Concordances
- ii. Bible Dictionaries
- iii. Commentaries

e. Computers / Tablets / Phones

III. Time preparation

a. Amount of Time

- i. Bible study takes time
- ii. Most ideal is 1 hour. → Not less than ½ hour.

b. Regular Time

- i. You have to set aside the time – Prioritize it.
- ii. QUESTION – But pastor!!! I don't have time!
- iii. *Illustration – \$10,000,000 - Purple Tuxedo Yellow polka dot bowtie.*

c. Time of Day

- i. Sharpest
- ii. Early part of the day.
- iii. Preparation starts the day before...

IV. Location

a. Place

- i. Quiet
- ii. Well lighted
- iii. Well Ventilated
- iv. Free of distractions
- v. Free of clutter
- vi. Comfortable (but not too comfortable!)
- vii. Regular spot

V. Body

- a. Posture – Sitting up at a table or desk.
- b. Physical Person
 - i. N – Nutrition
 - ii. E – Exercise
 - iii. W – Water
 - iv. S – Sunlight (Light)
 - v. T – Temperance
 - vi. A – Air
 - vii. R – Rest

VI. Mind

- a. Protecting the frontal lobe of the mind
 - i. T.V. / Movies / Games / Music –
 - ii. Illustration - Night vision and white light.

VII. Spirit

- a. Attitude
 - i. Negative
 - 1. Bible is boring
 - 2. Bible is not relevant
 - 3. Bible is a waste of time.
 - 4. Bible can't be trusted
 - 5. Bible was used to beat me over the head.
 - 6. Bible is too hard to understand.
 - 7. Bible criticizes my lifestyle.
 - 8. I already know what the bible says...
 - ii. Positive Attitudes – Student
 - 1. Attends class regularly
 - 2. Listens to teacher
 - 3. Attitude – Open and Teachable
 - 4. Studies diligently – Bible Study
 - 5. Applies learning
 - a. Ezra 7:10 - For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

b. KEY – We must choose ahead of time that we will follow where the scripture takes us.

b. Everyone is Biased

- i. We grow up with a clean slate
- ii. From the earliest time we learn about life.
 1. People
 2. Environment
 3. Experiences
- iii. This creates biases...
- iv. We need to be able to let go of biases if the bible leads us to do so.
- v. **Illustration – Holy Spirit is the driver.... We are the passenger.**
- vi. “Human minds vary. The minds of different education and thought receive different impressions of the same words, and is difficult for one mind to give tot one of a different temperament, education, and habits of thought by language exactly the same idea as that which is clear and distinct in his own mind. Yet to honest men, right-minded men, he can be so simple and plain as to convey his meaning for all practical purposes. If the man he communicates with is **not honest** and will not want to see and understand the truth, he will turn his words and language in everything to suit his own purposes. He will misconstrue his words, play upon his imagination wrest them from their true meaning and then entrench himself in unbelief, claiming that the sentiments are all wrong.”
– 1 SM 19
- vii. “Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ.” 1 SM 20
- viii. How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? Or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? – Counsels to Writers pg. 36
- ix. “As we take up the study of God’s word, we should do so with humble hearts. All selfishness, all love of originality, should be laid aside. Long-cherished opinions must not be regarded as infallible. It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long-established traditions that proved their ruin. They were determined not to see any flaw in their own opinions or in their expositions of the Scriptures; but however long men may have entertained certain views, if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded.” – Counsels to Writers Pg. 36

- c. Hunger for truth
 - i. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 – People will be deceived because they did not receive.... WHAT???
 - 1. Love of the Truth
 - ii. Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed. - Counsels to Writers pg 36
- d. Prayer
 - i. “Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given...” Christian Education pg 59
 - ii. “When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer, when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubt; and in the very study of the Bible skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct.” 5 T 704
 - iii. Holy Spirit is the Teacher –
 - 1. John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
 - iv. Luke 11:13 – If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?
 - v. William Miller’s Rules of Interpretation #3 - Nothing revealed in the Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Deuteronomy 29:29; Matthew 10:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Philippians 3:15; Isaiah 14:11; Matthew 21:22; John 14:13, 14; 15:7; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 5:13, 14, 15.

VIII. Conclusion

- a. Do everything possible to prepare to study the bible.
- b. If the situation is less than ideal.... Study anyway!